

**The Asia Foundation**  
**Strengthening Advocacy and Local Government Accountability**  
**CA No. 367-A-00-01-00130-00**

**PROGRESS REPORT**  
**October - December 2001**

**Summary of Program Activities in Current Reporting Period:**

- C     **Consultation meetings with partners**
- C     **Finance and compliance meeting**
- C     **Project workplan submission**
- C     **Sub-grant proposal submission**
- C     **Sub-grant agreements**
- C     **Project Steering Committee (PSC) formation**

**Consultation meetings with partners**

The project was initiated with a series of consultation meetings with implementing partners INSEC and Pro Public during October-November. The meetings helped to clarify issues of concern regarding the implementation schedule and activity descriptions, and provided opportunities for joint brainstorming on coordination. The partners agreed to maintain separate offices and staff in their respective project areas, but to coordinate wherever possible on substantive issues. They decided to divide the baseline survey into two steps: 1) a preliminary survey to assess needs and identify lead groups and their locations, and 2) a subsequent exercise to collect baseline data for qualitative and quantitative performance monitoring. The partners agreed to carry out the surveys separately in their respective areas, but to share reports in finalizing the working areas and lead groups. They also agreed to collaborate closely in developing their respective training materials to avoid duplication.

**Finance and compliance meeting**

Foundation staff attended a finance and compliance meeting with USAID in October 2001 during which the project description, sub-grant agreements, financial guidelines, and USAID standard procedures were reviewed and discussed.

**Project workplan submission**

In accordance with the agreement, the Foundation submitted its detailed annual workplan to USAID in November 2001, including activity descriptions and an implementation schedule.

**Sub-grant proposal submission**

With a view to promote common understanding of the project's objectives and approach, partners were asked to prepare sub-grant proposals in a standard format. This resulted in clear and comparable project descriptions, and detailed project implementation plans. After several iterations, the partners' final proposals were submitted to the Foundation in December 2001.

**Sub-grant agreements**

Following the receipt and review of final proposals, the Foundation signed sub-grant agreements with Pro Public and INSEC during the third week of December 2001. As notified earlier, the Foundation did not provide a sub-grant to Nepal Water for Health (NEWAH) as projected in the workplan. This was because of NEWAH's primary focus on drinking water

groups, while the project is more concerned with irrigation user groups. Pro Public is carrying out the work initially intended for NEWAH.

### **Project Steering Committee (PSC) formation**

The PSC was formed after signing of sub-grant agreements with partners in December. Both Project Coordinators from the implementing partners and the Foundation's Program Officer sit on the PSC. Two PSC meetings were conducted. Representatives of the national offices of federations/coalitions, specialized organizations/individuals, and USAID will be invited to participate in future PSC meetings on a regular basis.

### **Issues and challenges during the period:**

- **Preparatory exercises**
- **Adhering to the original project timeline**

#### **Preparatory exercises**

Due to the innovative nature of the project in the areas of citizenship, citizen participation, and governance, the Foundation and its partners are consulting extensively with national-level policy advocates and resource managers. A wide-range of preparatory work is also underway with specialized persons in the field.

#### **Adhering to original project timeline**

Field activities were delayed during this reporting period due to a number of factors. As noted above, Pro Public assumed responsibilities relating to water users groups initially intended for NEWAH. Sub-grant finalization required an additional month due to this change. Political instability and emergency regulations in rural districts led to postponement of the preliminary field survey to the second quarter. The extant ban on public assemblies without special permission is likely to affect field-level activities in the future.